(c) if not, the present status of this matter and by when this decision is likely to be taken?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND MINISTER OF STATE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF DISINVESTMENT (SHRI ARUN JAITELY): (a) to (c) The Government have decided to disinvest 51% of the equity of the company held by the Government in BALCO through strategic sale. Government have not taken any decision for disinvestment in NALCO.

Export of Steel By SAIL

*152. DR. ALLADI P. RAJKUMAR: Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state the strategy chalked out by SAIL to strengthen its export market?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF STEEL (SHRI DILIP RAY): In line with its Corporate philosophy of becoming a global player in exports, SAIL have evolved the following strategies:

(a) Value added exports

(b) Consistent export

(c) Market segmentation and sustained presence in respect segments

(d) Improved infrastructure at loading ports and steel plants

(e) Adequate and suitable market intelligence.

Protection to Domestic Automobile Industry

*153. SHRI VEDPRAKASH P. GOYAL: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have decided to allow import of used cars from 2001;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether any study has been conducted to asses its effect on Indian automobile industry;

(d) if so, the findings thereof;

(e) what happened to the domestic automobile industry in other developing countries where such steps were taken; and

(f) what steps Government propose to take to safeguard domestic automobile

industry?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) to (f) Cars are classified under Exim Code No. 87.03 of ITC(HS) Classifications of Export and Import Items, 1997—2002, and import of these items is presently restricted. In view of India's International commitments, all quantitative restrictions on imports maintained by India for balance of payment reasons are required to be removed by 1.4.2001.

Research and Information System for the Non Aligned and Other Developing Countries (RIS), an autonomous body under the Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, has conducted a study on behalf of Association of Indian Automobile Manufacturers on the WTO Regime and its implications for the Indian Automobile Industry. This study has stated that the implementation of the commitments undertaken by India as a member of the WTO will have far reaching implications for the automobile industry in India. As regards the impact on the domestic automobile industry in other developing countries, this study has stated that the countries which have allowed the import of second hand (used) vehicles have not been successful in establishing a competitive automobile industry.

However, even after removal of quantitative restrictions, the imports will still be subject to applicable tariffs, technical standards and environmental and safety norms. These measures singly or in combination can be appropriately used to create a level playing field for the domestic automobile industry. A decision on this issue will be taken in due course after examining all relevant aspects.

Corporate Hqs. of tea companies

*154. SHRI C.M. IBRAHIM: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the major tea companies in Assam have been under pressure from the State Govt. to shift their Corporate Headquarters from outside Assam into Assam;

(b) if so, whether Govt. have received any representations from such companies; and

(c) Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI